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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/570,156	03/27/2006	Makoto Hirano	127194	4890
25944	7590	01/12/2009	EXAMINER	
OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC P.O. BOX 320850 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320-4850			FORD, NATHAN K	
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1792				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
01/12/2009		PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/570,156	<b>Applicant(s)</b> HIRANO ET AL.
	<b>Examiner</b> NATHAN K. FORD	<b>Art Unit</b> 1792

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 September 2008.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.      2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1,2 and 5-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 5-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-166/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/9/08
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Applicant's Response***

Acknowledged is the applicant's request for reconsideration received on September 29, 2008. Claims 1 and 2 are amended; claims 5-8 are new.

To summarize the applicant's arguments:

As Todoroki's transfer unit is rendered inoperable upon the detection of a defective substrate, the apparatus cannot meet the claim limitation of transferring those "substrates other than a substrate which was determined to be in an abnormal substrate holding condition."

In response:

The claims merely require the conveyance of those substrates not deemed abnormal. Although it is true that wafer transfer is halted upon the recognition of an abnormal substrate, this is a provisional condition. The specification states that upon detection, the damaged wafer is "immediately removed" [0035]; subsequently, the transfer unit resumes operation, now conveying only unbroken wafers and satisfying the claimed limitations accordingly.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-2 and 5-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Todoroki, JP 11-054593, wherein machine translation was used.

Claims 1-2: Todoroki teaches the following [0015]:

- A substrate treatment chamber (40);
- A substrate holder (20) that can be inserted in the chamber [0018];
  - Wherein the holder comprises multiple stages arranged vertically;
- A substrate transfer unit (30) that conveys the substrates to the holder;
- A sensing device (50) for sensing a holding condition of the substrates within the holder [0020-22];
- A control device (80) which controls the transfer unit [0025, 0033-4].

Following the detection of an abnormal substrate, it is promptly removed from the holder, and the transfer unit subsequently conveys those wafers other than the substrate which as determined to be in an abnormal holding condition [0035].

Claims 5-6: These claims are drawn to the intended use of the apparatus, and a recitation concerning the manner in which a claimed apparatus is to be employed does not differentiate the apparatus from prior art satisfying the claimed structural limitations (*Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647). The transfer unit has the capacity to convey a solitary substrate.

Claims 7-8: These claims are drawn to the intended use of the apparatus as well. The transfer unit is capable of executing each of the recited functions.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a). A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nathan K. Ford whose telephone number is 571-270-1880. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30-5:00 EDT. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Cleveland, can be reached at 571-272-1418. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

/N. K. F./

Examiner, Art Unit 1792

/Michael Cleveland/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1792